(c) what steps have been proposed in the report, to take special care of the smaller units?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI BRAJ KISHORE TRIPATHY): (a) No, Sir. The report on the preparatory phase (PDF-B) of a project to introduce "Energy Efficiency Improvement in Steel Rerolling Sector in India" undertaken by Government of India with partial financial assistance from Global Environment Facility (GEF)/ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is under preparation.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Steel Industry Delegations Abroad

2635. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that delegations connected with steel industry were sent to foreign countries during the last two years for co-operation and development in the steel sector, in view of the growing global competition;

(b) if so, the details thereof and what subjects of mutual interest were discussed;

(c) the names of the countries with whom trade agreements were entered into by them and the details of each of the trade agreements; and

(d) the assistance expected therefrom?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI BRAJ KISHORE TRIPATHY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) The various delegations, discussed among other things, bilateral trade relations, terms of contract pertaining to import of coke/ coking coal, export of iron ore/steel products/manganese ore *etc.* price negotiations were also held for supply of pellets/pellet chips *etc.* In some cases the delegations signed MOUs with their trading partners in regard to cooperations in ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy, iron ore concentrates, bilateral trade, technical cooperation in Iron and Steel *etc.*The countries visited by the different delegations include USA, Japan, China, Russia, Australia. Peoples' Republic of Korea *etc.* While the discussions/ negotiations were in respect of the broad areas mentioned above, it would

not be in the commercial interests of the contracting parties to disclose specific details of the contracts/agreements. Since the discussions were held purely on commercial basis, no assistance was expected from the foreign parties. However, the visits of these delegations are expected to improve the customer/business relationships with the overseas trading partners.

Coke Oven-Battery Project in VSP

2636. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Visakhapatnam Steel Plant has decided to commission Coke Oven-Battery in the plant, to keep the plant running throughout the year;

(b) if so, the details of the project;

(c) whether Visakhapatnam Steel Plant has entered into a tie-up with any company for this purpose; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI BRAJ KISHORETRIPATHY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b)The proposed fourth Coke Oven-Battery will be similar in design and capacity to the existing three batteries at VSP with some additional improved features. The Coke Oven-Battery shall have 7m, tall 67 number ovens of 41.6 cum useful volume. A coke dry cooling plant will be provided. The fixed cost of the project is estimated to be Rs. 287 crores.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise in view of (c) above.

Categorisation of NMDC

†2637. SHRIMATI SAROJ DUBEY: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether any proposal to impart the status of Nav Ratna to National Mineral Development Corporation, by bringing it out from the category of Mini-Ratna, is under Government's consideration

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.